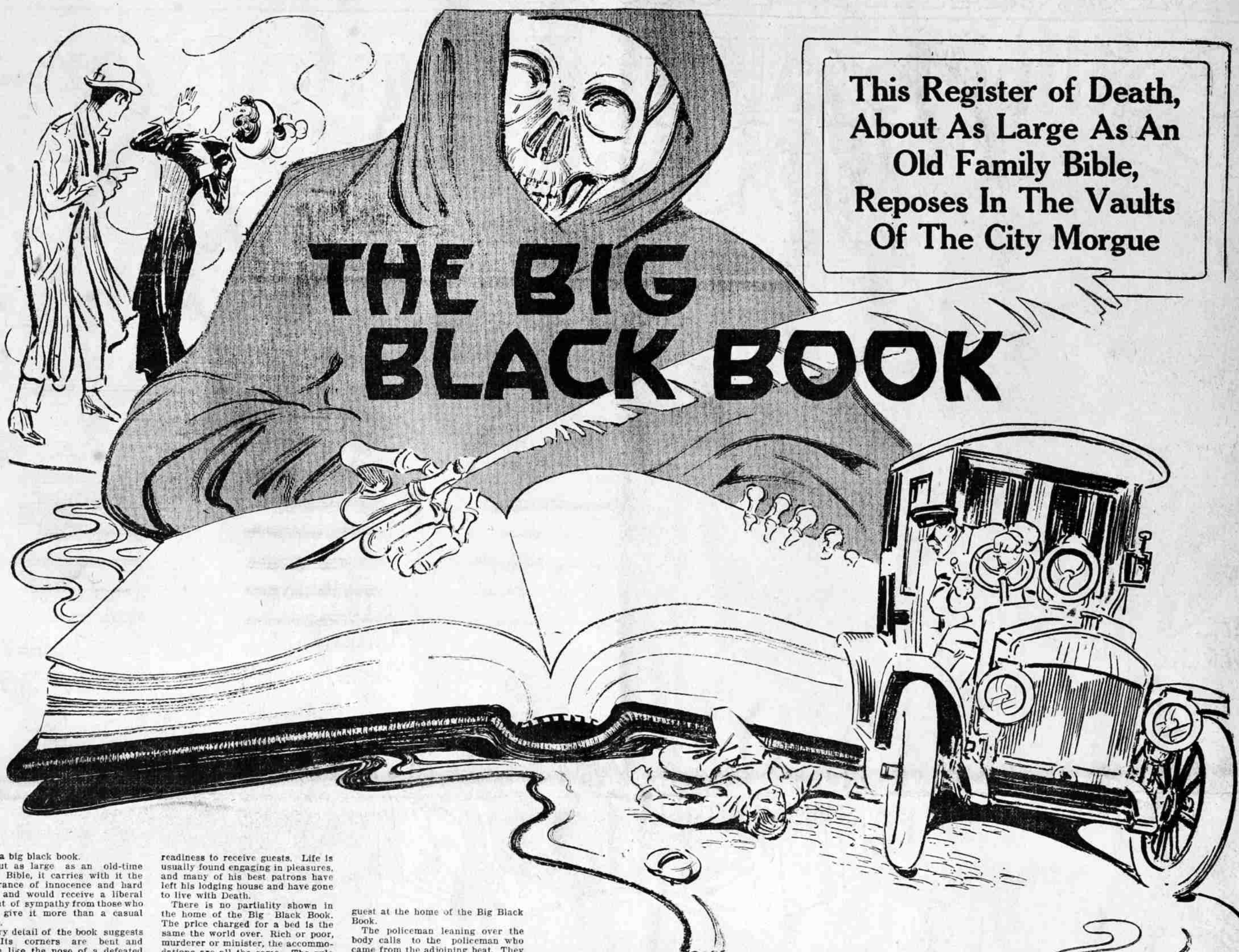


OGDEN, UTAH, SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 1915.



## It's a big black book.

About as large as an old-time family Bible, it carries with it the appearance of innocence and hard work, and would receive a liberal amount of sympathy from those who might give it more than a casual glance.

Every detail of the book suggests age. Its corners are bent and broken like the nose of a defeated prize fighter. The leather sides are worn, and a raveling hangs down here and there like curls from the head of a toothless hag. Something was written across its bumpy back once. But it must have been years ago, for only the scratch and tear of a pen point remains to tell the story.

No author's name decorates the book. The contributions which stare out at one from the yellow, faded pages can only be accredited to Murder, Suicide, Misfortune and Accident.

The Big Black Book is a register in Death's lodging house.

Between the covers which fall back limp and helpless when the volume is opened, are tales of heartaches, ruined lives, disappointments, maudlin scenes and broken promises. The shadows which make Life's tragedies are found on every page.

Here and there photographs peek out at one. They are illustrations of the stories the big, Black Book holds.

But the great, worn volume is really serviceable. It is a register of a massive, stone lodging house. In it is recorded the name and history of men, women and children who have lost in life's battles, and have chosen as their house of Death the home of the Big Black Book—the County Morgue.

Death is the landlord of this great stone building.

In the daytime little rays of sunshine chase one another up and down the corridors of marble, but with the fall of darkness they scamper away as if afraid.

At night a faint light from no place in particular, mitigates the shadows in the halls and seems to add to the loneliness of this cold, cheerless home of the dead.

**MANY VAGRANT GUESTS WANDER HERE TO SLEEP LAST SLEEP.**

Many vagrant guests wander here to sleep the last, long sleep. Transients, forever, they are at last registered in a lodging house, the landlord of which demands payment in full and in advance for every accommodation given.

The two principal solicitors for Death's hotel, Love and Hate, are responsible for the thousands of guests who registered there each year.

Wonderful stories would be unfolded if Life paid as much attention to business as Death. But Life is a fickle fellow. He has many clerks, and to them he entrusts the keeping of his Big Black Book.

Death is always on the job. He is careful to keep his lodging house in

readiness to receive guests. Life is usually found engaging in pleasures, and many of his best patrons have left his lodging house and have gone to live with Death.

There is no partiality shown in the home of the Big Black Book. The price charged for a bed is the same the world over. Rich or poor, murderer or minister, the accommodations are all the same. The rule of the house is "Pay in Advance."

Every city has a Big Black Book. Every city, too, has a lodging house of which Death is the proprietor. He is a mighty prosperous fellow, and the idea of having quantity with quality and a lot of both has not escaped him.

Watch him register a guest. It will not take you long to recognize the fact that he is a master at his business.

The place is a city. It is night. A drizzling rain is falling, and the street lights send out faint rays which seem to become entangled with one another and struggle for freedom.

From out of the semi-darkness comes a woman's scream. There is a shot, another scream, and all is still, save for the barking of a lone-some dog several blocks away.

A window is opened, and a man and woman peer out into the darkness. Then another and another window is raised, and frightened faces framed in a semi-gloom stare into space.

Half a block away a policeman pounds upon the sidewalk with his club, and the copper on the adjoining beat whistles back an answer. One newsboy yells to another, and the mail man collecting the letters from the corner street boxes, stops his horse and a two-wheeled wagon to see what's going on.

In ten minutes a crowd has gathered. All are curious, all are ignorant of what has drawn the other there.

Down at Death's lodging house a room is being made ready. A guest is soon to arrive. The proprietor is always on the job.

**POLICEMAN ON BEAT FINDS WOMAN'S BODY IN CORNER.**

In a fence corner the policeman on the beat finds the body of a woman. It lay as it had fallen, like a coverlet on the bed of a man who found he was an hour late to work.

Perhaps it is a victim of alcohol, perhaps an epileptic, or perhaps, a suicide. The policeman throws a search light upon the still form. A bullet has passed through her heart, and a little stream of blood trickles down the black suit to fall off and join the rivulets of water which are seeking to find a gutter.

One hand is clenched, the other lies out in front of the body like the arm of a football player who is trying to squirm across a white-washed line of victory. In the death-cramped hand something white is seen by the policeman. It is a picture—the picture of a man.

She was the victim of Love. It was he who received credit for this

guest at the home of the Big Black Book.

The policeman leaning over the body calls to the policeman who came from the adjoining beat. They whisper and the newcomer pushes his way through the crowd and goes to the next corner. He fishes in his pocket and finds a key with which he opens an iron box affixed to a pole in which there is a telephone. He raises a receiver to his ear and talks. Those standing around can hear but one sentence—"It's a murder."

In a few moments the sound of galloping horses and the sharp clanging of a bell are heard. It's an ambulance. It draws up to the gutter near where the policeman is standing guard over the motionless form on the ground. One man, then another leaps out. They run to the policeman's side. But one word is passed between them. It is "Dead?"

The body is lifted by four men and placed in the wagon. The horses seem as anxious to leave the scene as the driver and the policeman who has hopped on the back step. Someone utters a guttural sound which forms itself into "Morgue." There's a crack of a whip, the sound of a gong, and away they go toward Death's place.

And all this time Death has been dipping his pen in the ink at the desk of his lodging house. He is anxiously awaiting the new guest. She will soon register in the Big Black Book.

Business is business, you know. And old Death rubbed his hands in glee when the guest was assigned to a room. He had stolen another of Life's best roomers. He did not know her name and she had no baggage. But she paid in advance.

**NOW FOLLOW THE NEXT GUEST INTO HOME OF BIG BLACK BOOK.**

Follow the next guest to the home of the Big Black Book.

Life owns the lodging house where a young girl sits gazing out through a patched window at the falling snow. Notice the pallor of her face. Notice, too, the dark circles of worry under her big, black eyes. A letter lies on the window sill beside her. It is written in pencil, and is very short.

The room in which the girl sits is almost barren. It is a typical furnished room in the poor district of any big city.

The day slips into night and the girl has left the window.

A fat landlady knocks at the door of the room. Receiving no response she knocks again. She tries the door. It is locked. Then she goes across the hall to another door and knocks. A woman, no less fat than herself, appears. They talk, and both return to the door across the hall.

In turn they try to force an entrance, and finally the door yields to the weight of both their bodies thrown against it.

The lodger lies across the bed apparently asleep. By her side is a

small vial from which the cork has been removed. A red and white label stares up from the sides of the bottle.

Clutched between the stiffened fingers is the letter the girl has been

reading while she sat beside the window.

The housekeeper shakes the body, and her companion crosses herself. Both of their bloated faces are ashen. They know now that the

girl is sleeping the sleep from which no one awakens.

It is a suicide.

Down at Death's lodging house another room was being made ready. Another guest had tired of the miserable surroundings Life offered.

A detective at police headquarters answers the telephone. On the other end of the line one of the fat, dissipated women tells the story of the strange girl who "took something" in one of her rooms.

In half an hour two detectives search the clothing of the unfortunate. All marks of identification have been removed. A little bill of ashes on the stove hearth shows where they were burned.

The note is taken from the girl's hand. It said simply, "You didn't keep your promise." The detectives nod their heads knowingly, and the body is placed in a long, covered basket and removed to one of Death's special wagons. It is then hurried to his lodging house.

There is another registration in the Big Black Book. Love again must receive credit for the new lodger, but he must share his credit with Broken Promises. Suicide, too, must have his bit, but the big share of the profit goes to Death.

Each year the county morgues of every big city in the world become the last resting place of hundreds of men, women and children who die of violence or pass away without leaving any clue as to who they are or where they live.

And in each city, too, there is a Big Black Book. It tells of all the unfortunates who have registered at Death's lodging house. It is a record of tears and sobs, of heartaches, ruined lives, disappointments, maudlin scenes and broken promises.

Death, the proprietor of these hotels of silence, is always at the service of those who desire accommodations. His rates are the same the world over, and he will be found day and night behind the desk of his house ready to hand the dripping pen to any and all who have deserted Life's lodging house and wish to register with him in the Big Black Book.

